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Tornado damage to a home in Mississippi (photo courtesy of Andres Villalon)



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Mike Rugless, project manager of the FEMA Housing Inspections contract for the first four years and now Principal-in-Charge, has overseen more than one million inspections completed to date. "This is unlike any other work PB does," he says. "The difference lies in the urgency of the moment. Recovering from disaster simply isn't the same as waiting for a structure to be built. This is personal—we're dealing with someone's home."

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Tennessee house damaged by falling tree, as a result of a tornado (photo courtesy of Ben Ryan)

Such potential to alleviate a familial crisis clearly carries an emotional weight unmatched by other projects. Still, Rugless characterizes each disaster declaration as a professional project, with successful completion shaped by those basic criteria used to evaluate all engineering efforts. "We consider each of the 150 disasters that have been assigned to us to be a unique project with a start and a finish. FEMA judges us on the triad of timeliness, quality and customer service, and our inspectors work long hours, around homeowner schedules, seven days a week to achieve our goals."



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